

Congresswoman Matsui Celebrates Grand Opening of Tahoe Park Community Garden at Local Slow Foods Festival

This morning, Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-05) joined Sacramento City Councilman Kevin McCarty, Deputy Secretary for the California Department of Food and Agriculture David Pegos, Sacramento City Unified School District Superintendent Jonathan Raymond, and members of the community for the grand opening of the Tahoe Park Community Garden and Slow Food Festival. Congresswoman Matsui is the original sponsor of legislation in the House of Representatives (House Resolution 649), which would designate each August as Community Gardening Awareness Month. The event offered Sacramento families the opportunity to learn about community gardening, eating healthy, and the wealth of local produce available.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Saturday, April 10, 2010

CONTACT: MARA LEE

(202) 302-3249

Congresswoman Matsui Celebrates Grand Opening of Tahoe Park Community Garden at Local Slow Foods Festival

SACRAMENTO, CA – This morning, Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-05) joined Sacramento City Councilman Kevin McCarty, Deputy Secretary for the California Department of Food and Agriculture David Pegos, Sacramento City Unified School District Superintendent Jonathan Raymond, and members of the community for the grand opening of the Tahoe Park Community Garden and Slow Food Festival. Congresswoman Matsui is the original sponsor of legislation in the House of Representatives (House Resolution 649) , which would designate each August as Community Gardening Awareness Month. The event offered Sacramento families the opportunity to learn about community gardening, eating healthy, and the wealth of local produce available. Congresswoman Matsui's remarks, as prepared for delivery, are below:

“Thanks to the efforts of Councilman McCarty and many others here, the neighborhood of Tahoe Park can finally say that they have a Community Garden! And here in the Tahoe Park neighborhood, the strong sense of community that already exists will only be enhanced by this wonderful garden.

“Community gardens allow people to work together to improve their neighborhood, create a sense of community, and a connection to the environment. It has been found that areas with community gardens experience less crime and vandalism, and that they can help break-down community isolation by creating a common gathering place. A community garden can also increase food self-reliance and food security in urban communities, allowing citizens to grow their own foods and donate food to others in need.

“Moreover, the location of the garden here at Tahoe Park Elementary will provide the school's students access to fresh fruits and vegetables, and a stronger connection to the foods they eat. One of the most important benefits of community gardens is that they help produce truly nutritious food, and raise awareness about healthy food alternatives.

“First Lady Michelle Obama helped raise national attention when she, along with dozens of local school children created a garden at the White House. And I am working to raise awareness about the numerous benefits of Community Gardens, through my work in Congress.

“Working in coordination with the City of Sacramento and community members, I have introduced legislation that would recognize August of each year as Community Garden Awareness Month. This will help to promote the development and expansion of community gardens, and increase their accessibility to disadvantaged populations. I will be working to have this resolution passed in the coming months, and look forward to celebrating with all of you in August.

“Today’s event is about celebrating the newly renovated site, but it is also about embracing Sacramento’s natural surroundings. We are blessed to be in the Central Valley with fertile soil and ideal weather for growing local produce. And as a farmer’s daughter, and a native Californian, I can’t tell you how encouraged I am by the recent interest in supporting our local farms -and promoting sustainable agriculture.

“Locally-grown foods are seeing increased demand, and it is important that we help to preserve regional cuisine, and promote foods that are both local and in-season. Today’s event is an exciting step in that direction. Thank you all for being here today, and for interest in, and support of community gardens! I look forward to seeing the wonderful harvests the garden has to offer.”

###